

Midtown St. Albans Confirmation Group Meeting
October 1, 2018
Raleigh Municipal Building

Staff: Jason Hardin, Hannah Reckhow, Sara Ellis, Kristin Williams, Bynum Walter

Confirmation Group: Bonner Gaylord, Brittany Ruebesam (for Hilton/Thomas Keville), Willard Ross, Stephen Sposato, Lee Hilts, Shelley Winters, Ted Kunstling, Steve Brechbiel, David Jones, Donna Rosefield

Consultant team: Don Bryson (VHB)

Introductions – The group shared their name, connection to the group, interest in volunteering, connection to the area.

Jason Hardin, the project manager, provided background information:

- The role of the group, goals of the project, big picture/broad goals, current conditions.
- This group is not a steering committee, it's a confirmation group. The purpose is not to say the plan should do this or that, but we need the buy in and the information from the people who really know the area because they live and work there.
- The role of the group is to make sure the public process is wide open, in the past it hasn't been easy, but this group's primary task is to shape the future of the plan.
- At the end of the plan we want to see that the recommendations align with the plan throughout.
- There are some specific responsibilities:
 - To be effective; staff and group need to know the same information
 - We'll meet before major public events and after
 - We'll identify what is missing, what the plan needs to respond to, what are the recommendations, what is the final product
 - One role the group can have is to be ambassadors to the plan in your communities
 - Attendees have their own neighborhood group lists, and those people are much more likely to respond to you than a random person
 - Does this time generally work throughout the planning process? (Yes)
- Assets – members have access to a variety of spaces (i.e. hotel). Do you have suggestions for spaces we can meet in? (Duke Hospital, Kane Realty has a bunch of spaces, First Citizen's building, Coastal Credit Union)
- Next group meeting – 2nd full week of November
- What is the problem the plan is solving?
- What makes the place great?

- It ranges in the types of home owners, redevelopment of North Hills, other private initiatives. There hasn't been a ton of public investment, and that's a fundamental issue of the plan.
- There are questions with North Hills developing, what does that look like in terms of a future transportation demand? Not just in cars. If we did nothing, where would they go?
 - What are our options? Transit, better facilities for transit, how do we move people around by car?
 - Looking at transportation infrastructure, greenway plans, sidewalks
 - A lot of this area probably isn't a land use question. But there are opportunities to see what the FLUM is telling us.
- The group viewed street grids from Raleigh – one is the midtown area, one is downtown, one is five points, one is Oberlin village. Which is which?
 - Citizen comment – one of the issues is east/west transportation and I-440 doesn't have a cross access point.

The group discussed the project timeline.

- Citizen comment – if you're going to do meetings during the month of December, you need to get the word out soon, people are really busy during that month.
 - Based on the timeline for the project, we couldn't do the meetings during thanksgiving time, and January is too far out
- Citizen question – an expectation is to attend all three meetings?
 - No, an expectation would be that confirmation group members attend the main meeting
- Current status – we had three visioning meetings, we compiled the results by topic.
 - Does “getting around by car” refer to within the region? Or is it getting in and out?
 - Most of the respondents lived in the area, so it's generally internal circulation.

Jason Hardin discussed lessons learned from visioning meetings.

The group had a discussion of public input.

How can we best communicate with folks? How can we make it easy for them to participate?

- Backtrack to the map with Six Forks “bleeding red”, the Six Forks Road plan has been authorized. How will it work when people address Six Forks as it exists today, in a vacuum? How to we communicate that there's a plan to fix the area, despite the fact that we know there's current problems.
 - That's part of the next set of meetings where we talk about current conditions.
- Is there a plan for using publicinput.com or online public input methods to allow people to give input directly, in the moment?

- It's got to be broken out in the maps, online – when we did the Six Forks study you had to go to page 136 to find what you needed, and the only way to understand were to come to the meetings and see giant maps.
- Need a separate section on current and future maps – a separate document, by the time you get to it on your computer it's hard to see what you're looking for.
- We need a section for the visual learners, and a section for those who would like to read the 170 pages.
- What was your participation rate?
 - We're putting together a market analysis that's getting really detailed, that will focus on employment. The ballooning of population during the day was striking to the consultant.
- Was anyone there to shop? Probably not. Maybe at the farmer's market. Are there people coming in and going out on a weekday who would be part of this?
- That addresses the point – we don't hear from employees, most employees probably aren't local, but it would be great to find out if they are. We don't have great data on traffic; particularly on cut through in residential neighborhoods. Sometimes residents are the worst traffic offenders (running stops, speeding, etc.) because they're familiar with the neighborhood.
- The lack of data is an issue, we have a lot of opinions and anecdotes, but I don't think my experience matches what I'm hearing.
- We focused largely on transportation, but what about schools? When we have new people moving in, are there going to be seniors, kids, how do we manage future populations?
- The survey got circulated through Nextdoor, but we need it circulated through the companies, so employees are receiving it.
 - That type of outreach is something the staff and consultant team can do.
- We're seeing a large influx of different types of transportation technology – Bird scooters, Uber, etc. Are we researching the sustainability impact as well?
 - Yes, we need to look at non-traditional trips – are people using ride sharing services?
- Wall Street Journal had an article about how bike fatalities are climbing, which should raise the question – how well are our bike routes designed? Bike routes were put throughout the city without much input, the “zealots” are planning out the bike lanes.
- Scooters do not have a place – sidewalk doesn't work, bike lane doesn't work. It's important to think about working it out safely.
- We see bird scooters all over the place, and the controls that are supposed to be in place are not being observed.
 - There is demand out there for short trips, not necessarily in a car, and we don't have an infrastructure that lends itself to that not in a car. How can we make it work better for everybody?
- A bus route/a bike route is not going to meet our needs if we need to go to the orthodontist, or I have a dentist appointment at 11am. I'm concerned about looking to the mass solution, and forgetting about the practical use that so many of the residents have. We can't get out because there's so much traffic.

What was it about the public meeting you attended that made it work?

- The rollout meeting for the Six Forks corridor had 150 people, it was scheduled for 1 ½ hours, but it went for 2 ½ hours. Most people came back to the follow-up meetings, the maps were on easels, laid out on tables, we did breakouts. It was a real sense of community. People had buy in. There was an initial presentation, then everyone went around to look at the maps. There were 10 or 12 large breakouts with the maps, you gathered with a staff member and had post its, talked with staff and each group elected a person to report out to the entire body.
- Framing at the beginning to give everyone a common understanding, then breaking out to have more specific questions and feedback.
- One catch – a lot of people don't go to public meetings, the off-shore drilling meeting held at the Hilton was held well. It was a rolling meeting – a room where there was an initial presentation, you could come in at any time. (It ran continuously for a 2-hour period) from there, you could speak to staff one on one. The whole thing ran from like 3-7 and you could drop in for as long or as little as you wanted.
- The Department of Interior – had online forms you could enter in the meeting space, and outside, had pamphlets you could take with you, and you could email your information later on up to a week or two afterwards.
- My barrier is that it's going to be an hour and a half long, I can't leave, I have to listen to people talking. If it's a rolling meeting it feels a lot more accommodating.
- You're dealing with two different types of populations – the people who want to get out before traffic is bad, and those who live there and would like to leave after traffic died down. There are two very different types of places you're dealing with (two different microcosms).
- Do we have a FAQ feature? I.e. why are we making midtown into a high-rise area, why are we clearing cutting land?
- How about streaming the meeting? Or filming these presentations and putting them out on podcasts?
- My concern is engaging with the communities who are typically involved – if that is not a resource that you typically use, how do we engage? What about the bus stops? Is the information being publicized there? Engagement should be irrespective of land ownership, there's an inherent sense of buy in if you own vs not. It is important to reiterate that your input is important throughout the process.
- A lot of the input we get is from people who may not have a second job, don't have kids at home, don't have those barriers.
- Have you considered a dual language? Language, trust – we need to put forth a good faith effort to try.
- Are there any other underrepresented communities? It could help to have an interpreter who could assist with language barriers, use other social media forms – Instagram, have a hashtag, sponsored posts
- New Kane development residents may not attend Midtown CAC
- One option is a Twitter townhall, a bunch of different twitter feeds showing up live responding

- Could we get the cable channels to offer their public information time? Can we stream it in advance on the cable channels? Run that in the middle of the night.
- Ken Bowers did some YouTube videos – one specifically about Midtown. The public access channel that city of Raleigh has is a resource.
- There are several public schools in the area, we have channels to communicate with the families and there's meeting space. Safe routes to school can be included.
- Include schools that are attended by people in the area, even though the students may not live in the area.
- There are at least 8 churches on Six Forks we can reach out to.
- Kane has a number of channels which they can do outreach through.
- The key is making sure people have an opportunity to learn and be heard.

The group addressed additional questions.

What's the timeframe that we're aiming for?

- In terms of looking to the future, decades out. In terms of likely timeline for actions, they could range from immediate, no cost actions to significant capital projects that might be accomplished within 10 years

What kind of funding is available once the plan hits the board?

- Bond funding for the bigger projects
- Some can be plugged into regular budgets
- Some won't have a capital cost, and it will be a change to a map that effects future analysis

How do we balance current concerns vs. planning for the future?

- We'll get into that a lot more with current conditions.